

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IACT IMMEDIATE 467

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 NICOSIA 3929

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CY TU EAIR UN

SUBJ: REOPENING OF NICOSIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

REF: STATE 242003

1. SUMMARY: PER INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL, EMBOFFS MET NOVEMBER 5 WITH UNSYG SPEC REP POLITICAL ADVISOR AND BRITISH HICOM REPS TO DISCUSS REOPENING NICOSIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT UNDER SUPERVISION OF UN/ICAO. CONSENSUS HERE IS THAT THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO WORK OUT POLITICALLY BUT THAT ONCE HIGH LEVEL AGREEMENT REACHED TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS COULD BE TAKEN ON BY ICAO WITH FAIR EXPECTATION OF SUCCESS. WHILE ROLE OF OBSERVERS IMPORTANT, THEIR EFFECTIVENESS WOULD DEPEND FINALLY ON GENUINE WILLINGNESS OF PARTIES TO COOPERATE. DETAILS OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY COULD BE DEFINED ONCE LARGER QUESTION SETTLED. END SUMMARY.

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2. THREE FAMILIAR VARIATIONS DISCUSSED: (1) REPAIR AND RE-

OPENING FOR ALL USES; (2) REPAIR AND REOPENING INITIALLY FOR HUMANITARIAN FLIGHTS BY UN BUT WITH DECLARATION OF INTENT TO SEEK WAYS EXTEND SERVICE TO CIVILIAN FLIGHTS; AND (3) UN REPAIR OF RUNWAYS WITH FUTURE USE TO BE DISCUSSED. EMBOFFS PUSHED FOR DISCUSSION IN FRAMEWORK OF OPTION ONE, WITH OPTION TWO RESERVED FOR FALLBACK POSITION, AND WERE SUPPORTED IN THIS BY BRITISH. UN POLITICAL ADVISOR EXPRESSED DOUBTS THAT SUCH FIRST STEP COULD BE MADE PALATABLE TO TURKS SINCE IT CLEAR FROM DENKTASH REMARKS THAT GOT VIEWS AIRPORT STATUS AS KEY ELEMENT OF ADVANCED NEGOTIATIONS. HE WAS NONETHELESS AGREEABLE TO DISCUSS FEASIBILITY MAXIMUM PROGRESS AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

3. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT GOT AND TURK CYPRIOTS HAVE FAR LESS NEED FOR REOPENING THAN DOES GREEK SIDE. TURKS NOW HAVE TYMBOU (SOUTHEAST OF NICOSIA) OPEN FOR LIMITED USE. MORE PEOPLE GREEK SIDE EAGER TO TRAVEL. ALSO, THERE IS NAGGING PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE ON GREEK CYPRIOTS, CUT OFF FROM OUTSIDE WORLD EXCEPT FOR FERRY (THIRTY-SIX-HOUR RIDE) FROM PIRAEUS. FACT THAT AIRPORT HAS BECOME MICROCOSM OF BASIC QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY PRESENTS FORMIDABLE POLITICAL BARRIER. FOR THIS REASON ANY DISCUSSION CHANGE IN STATUS MUST BE PLACED IN TERMS OF "INTERIM" OR "PROVISIONAL" REOPENING, WITH POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS LEFT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. WITH TURKS HOLDING ALL HIGH CARDS, WILLINGNESS OF GOT TO CONCEDE EVEN THIS IS, IT EMPHATICALLY AGREED, UNLIKELY.

4. UN POLITICAL ADVISOR WAS OF OPINION THAT UN/ICAO CAPABLE OF MOBILIZING TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS ESSENTIAL TO REOPENING AND SUPERVISING FULL OPERATION OF AIRPORT IF ADEQUATE DEGREE OF POLITICAL AGREEMENT ACHIEVED.

5. ROLE OF OBSERVERS: FOR GOC TO ACCEPT GOT OBSERVERS AT AIRPORT, WHICH LIES WITHIN AREA CONTROLLED BY GOC (ALBEIT OCCUPIED BY UNFICYP), WOULD BE INTOLERABLE POLITICAL CONCESSION. THEREFORE ANY DISCUSSION OF OBSERVERS SHOULD SPECIFY TURK CYPRIOTS AND GREEK CYPRIOTS.

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A. IMMIGRATION: INITIAL IPPEQJATION FORMALITIES COULD BE PLACED IN HANDS OF ICAO, WITH UN STAMPS ENTERED IN PASSPORTS AND DUPLICATE IMMIGRATION/EMIGRATION CARDS SENT TO GREEK/TURK SIDES. ACTUAL PRESENCE OF OBSERVERS COULD BE KEPT TO MINIMUM AS LONG AS BOTH SIDES PUT TRUST IN ACCURACY OF ICAO. PASSENGERS WOULD THEN PASS THROUGH IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES OF ZONE TO WHICH THEY TRAVELING. (ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD BE TACIT NOT EXPLICIT IN ANY AGREEMENT).

B. CUSTOMS: CUSTOMS FORMALITIES COULD BE CARRIED OUT IN

SAME MANNER AS IMMIGRATION WITH OBSERVERS FROM OTHER SIDE
CHECKING AS DESIRED.

C. ICAO WOULD HAVE TO PLACE SOME QUALIFIED PERSONNEL DOWN TO
AT LEAST MEDIUM AIRPORT MANAGEMENT LEVELS IN SUCH ACTIVITIES
AS TOWER, METEOROLOGY, SCHEDULING OF DEPARTURES/ARRIVALS,
BUILDING MAINTENANCE AND OTHER COMMON INTEREST ASPECTS OF
AIRPORT OPERATION. OBSERVERS COULD AGAIN BE HELD TO MINIMUM;
THEIR FUNCTION WOULD BE PRIMARILY TO VERIFY IMPARTIALITY OF
ICAO SUPERVISION.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 NICOSIA 3929

EXDIS

D. AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE, RESERVATIONS, TICKETING, MANIFESTING,
BAGGAGE HANDLING AND LIKE COULD PROBABLY BEST BE CARRIED
OUT BY AIRLINE COMPANIES THEMSELVES. ICAO WOULD HAVE SUPER-
VISORY AND LIAISON RESPONSIBILITY TO INSURE THAT TURKS AND
GREEKS TREATED EQUITABLY. (THIS HAS BEEN PRIME TURK CYPRIOT
COMPLAINT IN PAST.) MUTUAL CONFIDENCE RESULTING FROM POLI-
TICAL AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE RELIED ON TO ACHIEVE EVEN

MINIMAL OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY, AND IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC EXPECT ICAO AND OBSERVERS TO ENFORCE FAIR PRACTICES IN CLIMATE OF TOTAL SUSPICION.

6. EMPLOYMENT: THIS ALSO TRADITIONALLY SORE SUBJECT WITH TURKS. IT WOULD BE BROACHED IN ANY INITIAL TALKS ON OPENING FEASIBILITY. NEITHER GOT NOR TURK CYPRIOTS WOULD CONSIDER ANY REOPENING WHICH DID NOT PROVIDE FOR MORE THAN FAIR SHARE OF TURK EMPLOYEES TO MAKE UP FOR VIRTUAL GREEK CYPRIOT MONOPOLY OF JOBS IN FORMER YEARS. FOR ITS PART, GOC WOULD BE UNDER PRESSURE TO RE-EMPLOY GREEK CYPRIOTS WHO HAVE LOST AIRPORT JOBS.

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7. EXPENSES: REACTIVATION UNDER UN WOULD BE EXPENSIVE PROPOSITION. SOME COSTS COULD BE DEFRAIDED FROM UN CHANNELING LANDING FEES AND CUSTOMS DUTIES TO ICAO (THIS WOULD ALSO AVOID QUESTION OF HOW TO SPLIT THEM).

8. FIR SYSTEM: ALTHOUGH NICOSIA IS ASSIGNED FIR EXTENDING TWO-HUNDRED NAUTICAL MILES NORTH AND SOUTH AND THREE-HUNDRED NM EAST AND WEST, IT PRESENTLY HAS NO MEANS OF ENFORCING AIR TRAFFIC DIRECTIVES. TURKISH AIR FORCE HAS GAINED EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF CYPRIOT AIR SPACE AND IGNORES NICOSIA ATC, WHICH NONETHELESS CONTINUES TO FUNCTION. SINCE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL CONSIDERED SOVEREIGN RIGHT, GOC WOULD BE RELUCTANT PERMIT TURKISH PARTICIPATION IN ATC ACTIVITIES, EXCEPT HOPEFULLY THROUGH JOINT BOARD DEVICE NOTED BELOW. IF TURKS OPEN TYMBOU TO COMMERCIAL AIR OPERATIONS AND ESTABLISH ATVN CURRENT CHAOS WOULD INCREASE.

9. TURK CYPRIOT AND GREEK CYPRIOT ACCOMMODATION: IN ANY REOPENING IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL ESTABLISH AN AIRPORT BOARD MADE UP OF TURK CYPRIOTS AND GREEK CYPRIOTS TO ASSIST UN/ICAO IN WORKING OUT MANY ASPECTS OF AIRPORT OPERATIONS IN CLIMATE

OF COOPERATION AND PRAGMATISM. GOC CAN BUY THIS. IF WE MAKE ASSUMPTION THAT GOT AND GOG COULD REACH AGREEMENT THIS POINT, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT CYPRIOTS UNDER CLERIDES AND DENKTASH LEADERSHIP MIGHT BE ABLE ARRANGE ACCOMMODATIONS AT LOCAL WORKING LEVEL. BASIC ISSUES THAT TOUCH ON SOVEREIGNTY IMPLIED IN TRAVEL CONTROL, FIR, ETC WOULD HAVE TO INVOLVE GOG AND GOT IN SOME FASHION, HOPEFULLY INDIRECT AS IN OTHER ASPECTS OF PRESENT CLERIDES - DENKTASH NEGOTIATION. KEY TO ANY MOVEMENT IS GOT POLITICAL AGREEMENT COOPERATE IN PRACTICAL, INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS THAT PREJUDGE TO AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM THE ULTIMATE RESOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM. AS OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH CLERIDES, ET AL, ATTEST, GOC IS WILLING EVEN EAGER TO MAKE REALISTIC COMPROMISES FOR THE SAKE OF REOPEN-

ING. JOINT BOARD CONCEPT RECOGNIZES BY IMPLICATION A PER-
MANENT PARTICIPATION OF TURKISH CYPRIOT ADMINISTRATION,
UNDER A FEDERAL SYSTEM, IN AIRPORT OPERATION, WHICH IS A
VERY LONG STEP TOWARD TURKISH POSITION.

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